



## *NEWS RELEASE*

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### **CITIZENS BANK OF MASSACHUSETTS PRESIDENT & CEO TOM HOLLISTER WINS SBA'S FINANCIAL SERVICES AWARD**

**BOSTON** – Thomas J. Hollister, President and CEO of Citizens Bank of Massachusetts, has been named the 2003 Massachusetts Financial Services Advocate by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) according to an announcement made by Elaine Guiney, Massachusetts SBA Director.

The Financial Services Advocate Award is presented annually to an individual who assists small businesses in obtaining financing either directly or through advocacy efforts to increase the availability of financial services.

“The SBA Advocate awards honor the best small business has to offer, and Tom Hollister is an outstanding choice,” said SBA Regional Administrator Jeffrey Butland. “This is an outstanding testimonial, not only to his accomplishments, but to his commitment and dedication to small business success and community service as well. I join my SBA colleagues in congratulating Tom on this significant achievement.”

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As the President and CEO of Citizens Bank of Massachusetts, Hollister oversees the \$26.5 billion banking enterprise, which includes 3,800 employees and 245 branch offices stretching from Greater Boston to Cape Cod and the Berkshires. Under Hollister's leadership, Citizens Bank was the #1 SBA lender in Massachusetts in 2002 with 995 loans totaling more than \$42 million. In addition, Citizens Financial Group was ranked the #1 SBA lender in New England and the #2 lender nationwide.

“Because of Tom Hollister’s leadership, advocacy and strategic focus, Citizens Bank has gained statewide and national recognition this year for its commitment to small business lending,” said Guiney. “As SBA’s fiscal year draws to a close, Citizens is ranked #1 in Massachusetts again with 1,077 loans totaling \$41 million.”

Hollister will be honored at an awards luncheon at Boston Marriott Copley Place at noontime on September 12, 2003. The Massachusetts Small Business Person of the Year, Holly Safford, President of The Catered Affair in Hingham, will be honored along with other small business advocates from throughout the commonwealth. The event is open to the public and those interested in attending should contact Christine Carter at SBA at 617-565-5560.

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*For more information about all of the SBA’s programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA or TDD 704-344-6640, or locally at 617-565-5590 or visit the SBA’s extensive Web site at <http://www.sba.gov>.*